

THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY
HYDERABAD 500 007



SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
M.A. English Part I
COURSE III BRITISH LITERATURE — I

(This set of assignments is on 5 pages.)

Instructions

- Each Assignment is based on one (or more) Block(s) of the course material, as indicated at the top of each Assignment. Please read the Block thoroughly before attempting the Assignment based on it.
- The Units in each Block are based on specific literary texts (poems or plays or novels.) You must read the text (poem or play or novel) along with the Unit.
- Answers in each Assignment should be suitably and adequately illustrated with references to the texts discussed in the Units.
- Answers lifted verbatim from the course material, the internet, or other sources will be awarded poor grades. You may refer to these sources, but you must write in your own words and acknowledge the sources referred to in your answers.
- Proof-read your answers for spelling and grammatical errors before submitting them.
- The word limit suggested for each question is meant only to guide you. Try not to *greatly exceed* or *fall greatly below* the word limit.
- For any queries, relating to this course and its assignments, please write to: lavya@efluniversity.ac.in (Dr. K. Lavanya).

Assignment 1 (Based on Block I)

- I. In Unit 1 of this Block you learned that the English court during the Renaissance was the arena not only of political decision-making but also of literary activity. Explain, with suitable examples, how the English court influenced the creation and reception of poetry during this age. (about 700-800 words)

- II. Explain, with suitable examples, **any three** of the following terms: (500 words each)
 - a. The pastoral
 - b. Metaphysical conceit
 - c. Petrarchan sonnet
 - d. Courtly love
 - e. Elizabethan lyric

- III. “Love for Donne is an experience, not an ideal.” Explain and illustrate this statement with the help of any one of the poems of John Donne that you have studied in Unit 3 of this Block. (about 800 words)
- IV. Read the following extract from Book IX of *Paradise Lost*. Identify the speaker and the context and explain the lines. What does the extract tell you about the characterization of the speaker? (500 to 750 words)

som cursed fraud
Of Enemie hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown,
And mee with thee hath ruind, for with thee
Certain my resolution is to Die;
How can I live without thee, how forgoe
Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly joyn'd,
To live again in these wilde Woods forlorn?
Should God create another Eve, and I
Another Rib afford, yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart; no no, I feel
The Link of Nature draw me: Flesh of Flesh,
Bone of my Bone thou art, and from thy State
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe

- V. In Section 5.5.4 of Unit 5 in this Block, you were given an overview of the different critical perspectives on *Paradise Lost* over the ages. In the light of this, how would *you* interpret the portrayal of the crucial climax in Book IX? (Do not simply summarize the views presented in the Section; try and present your own perspective. Or make an attempt to argue for /against any one perspective.) (750-1000 words)

Assignment II (Based on Block II & Block III)

- I. Describe, with suitable examples, the genres and themes popular in English Renaissance drama. What important departures in these two aspects do you find in Shakespeare's plays? (about 1000 words)
- II. Ben Jonson's *Volpone, or the Fox* abounds in playlets within the play. Choose at least two such playlets within the play and explain their contribution to the themes of the play. (You must clearly mention the Scene and Act numbers, as well as describe the context and contents of the scenes.) (700-1000 words)
- III. You have studied two revenge tragedies in this Block: *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. Now, answer the following:
 - a) What do you understand by the term 'revenge tragedy'? What are its characteristic features? Explain these features with reference to the two plays in the genre that you have studied. (800-1000 words)
 - b) How would you account for the popularity of the theme of personal vengeance for the English audience of this age? (500 words)
 - c) Compare the portrayal of the two women protagonists of the two plays with regard to the theme of agency. (800 words)
- IV. In Unit 1 of this Block you read that Shakespeare's history plays create and reinforce a sense of English identity. Explain how this identity is developed and portrayed in the history play that you have read in the Block, i.e., *Henry V*. (around 1000 words)
- V. Read the following extract, identify the play it is taken from, and explain the context. Also explain the extract in terms of the important theme that it highlights. (800-1000 words)

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Assignment III (Based on Block IV)

- I. What do you understand by the term ‘Restoration’? Which is the most well-known literary genre of the Restoration? And what are the significant features of this genre? (500-750 words)
- II. Write brief explanatory notes on any three of the following: (500 words each)
- a) Comedy of manners
 - b) The mock-heroic mode
 - c) Augustan satire
 - d) The Enlightenment
 - e) Neoclassicism
- III. Explain how Dryden satirizes the notion of ‘legacy’ in *MacFlecknoe*. Support your answer with adequate textual references. (1000 words)
- IV. Read the following extract from *The Rape of the Lock*. Identify the context and say what the extract describes. Comment on the style and the images used. (750-1000 words)
- And now, unveil'd, the toilet stands display'd,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncover'd, the cosmetic powers.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears;
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears.
Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
- V. Compare the characters of Mirabell in *The Way of the World* and Horner in *The Country Wife* to evaluate the ways in which these two characters portray the theme of immorality, popular in Restoration comedy. (1500 words)

Assignment IV (Based on Block V)

- I. Explain how the novel differs from the romance, the allegory and the epic.
(500-750 words)

- II. Explain the form and style of Richardson’s novel *Pamela*, with suitable illustrations from the text of the novel (around 1000 words)

- III. Unit 3 of this Block provides a discussion of *Robinson Crusoe* in terms of three themes — Politics, Religion, and Individualism. Which of these do you find the most convincing and why?
(around 1000 words)

- IV. In Unit 4 of this Block, we discussed Fielding’s *Joseph Andrews* as a novel that departs from the picaresque tradition it belongs to. Based on this, explain how the protagonist Andrews is not just a traditional ‘picaro’. Select and explain incidents from the novel which show that he is both hero and anti-hero.
(1000-1500 words)

- V. Identify and explain, with suitable textual illustrations, any two aspects of English society and culture that Swift satirizes in *Gulliver’s Travels*.
(1500- 2000 words)
